DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 025 690 AC 003 070

Mature Students; The Opportunities Open to Them and the Disabilities from which They Suffer, Together with Some Recommendations and Information.

Workers Educational Association, London (England).
Pub Date 67
Note-20p.
Available from-Workers' Educational Assn., Temple House, London W1, England (2 shillings).
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.10
Descriptors-Admission (School), *Adult Students, College Preparation, Colleges, Daytime Programs, *Educational Opportunities, *Educational Problems, Grants, High School Curriculum, Manpower Needs, Teacher Education, Vocational Schools
Identifiers-*England

Mature students undertake studies at colleges of education, vocational institutions, and long term residential colleges, usually as a sequel to interests and studies cultivated in adult classes. Increased demands in teaching, social services, and management, as well as demands for upgrading of technical skills have increased educational opportunities. Admission requirements are often flexible and aid is available from Local Educational Associations for all students receiving two 'A' levels in General Certificate of Education and acceptance at a university. Long term residential colleges such as Ruskin, Hillcroft, the Cooperative College, Fircroft, Coleg Harlech, and Newbattle Abbey are expanding as centers in which students can be prepared for the university or other forms of higher education. Teachers colleges are being encouraged to provide more flexible admission procedures and to accept more mature students. Day colleges in metropolitan areas provide convenient teacher training facilities and grants which are sufficient for married women. It is suggested that new residential colleges be founded in addition to further expansion of present ones, and that methods of admission and grant-aid be revised. (pt)

AC003070 Nov 68

Mature Students

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINION STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED025690

The opportunities open to them and the disabilities from which they suffer

Together with some recommendations and information

AC003070

Workers' Educational Association
Temple House, London W1

DEFINITION: ***'mature student', an adult student, usually over 25 years of age, who, owing to the early school leaving age and adverse personal or social circumstances, was unable to proceed to full-time higher education at the normal age, but who has pursued some form of continued study since leaving school and has shown sufficient quality to warrant a place in one of the colleges of higher education.***

BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVE

In 1927 the Adult Education Committee, set up some years earlier by the Board of Education 'to promote the development of liberal education for adults', addressed itself to the problem of gaining more widespread entrance to universities and residential colleges for 'adult students', or as we now style them, mature students. The Committee issued a report, *Full-Time Studies* (Paper No. 7, H.M.S.O.), and made recommendations, many of which proved to be twenty years ahead of their time. The Committee, in an early paragraph, noted 'that the problem of ways and means has proved so difficult that the proportion of students in the Adult Education movement who have reached the university has been extremely small'. They were speaking of a somewhat selected body of students, those in fact whom the university extension and tutorial class movement had thrown up, and who had shown not only great gifts but also the capacity not to be discouraged by the difficulties put upon the worker-student by economic insecurity and long working hours. To help these students Oxford and Cambridge Universities, in the van of liberal feeling, had instituted scholarship awards in the early days of the tutorial class movement, and had secured for them, by reason of their maturity and experience in classes, exemption from preliminary parts of the normal honours course. Birmingham and Nottingham Universities, too, had for some time made provision for two-days-a-week teaching for adult students who could travel in. And the Cassel Trust had been making the way smoother by making available a sum sufficient each year to enable 20 students to spend one term either at Ruskin College or at a university in England or Wales. Certain L.E.A.S, notably Leeds and the West Riding, were—generously for the times—pioneering another form of aid by awarding scholarships tenable at university by tutorial class students.

In their review the Adult Education Committee commended the work of the residential colleges—Ruskin, the Catholic Workers' College, Fircroft, the Co-operative College, Hillcroft and Avoncroft—in giving many working men and women the chance of following, for spells of up to a year and in peaceful, if frugal, surroundings, the interest in liberal and social studies they had formed in adult classes. Most of these men and women had been aroused in mind and imagination by their work in voluntary societies, in trades unions, political parties, and the adult education movement, and were seeking at these colleges such deeper understanding as would make them more effective on their return to those spheres as branch members and lay teachers. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that at Ruskin and the Catholic Workers' College some students had qualified themselves academically by taking the University Diploma in Economics and Political Science. A remark of the Principal of Hillcroft which is quoted in the report may enable us to draw up the balance sheet of opportunities-against-disabilities as they then existed: 'It was very difficult for a woman to get any guarantee that she would be taken back, and in consequence women who desired to return to the same employment were reluctant to come to the college. Women in their twenties who

desired to undertake a professional training, e.g., nursing, found the year of general education an invaluable preparation for the necessary study'.

For the Adult Education Committee in 1927 the picture before them seemed a relatively simple one:

> 'In our view, adult students will probably fall into two groups. The first will consist of those who desire a period of study at the university to continue the work which they have done in extra-mural courses and who then wish to return to their former occupations. For these students a one-year course will represent the maximum period which they can spare. The other group will consist of those who, after a year at the university, prove to have special ability in a certain direction, and who desire to pursue their studies for a second year or even as far as an Honours Degree, hoping later to undertake work in which their special gifts can be more adequately used than in their former occupations. In many cases, the student will have in mind the profession of tutor or lecturer in Adult Education courses. . . .'

The prospects confronting the mature student, as described by the Adult Education Committee, remained substantially unchanged, up to the Second World War. The economic distress and mass unemployment of the early and mid-1930s made students hold back, and owing to policies of fiscal stringency the encouragement that a more generous flow of L.E.A. awards might have given was withheld. It is highly significant of the restrictive mood and misplaced values of those times that the main recommendation of the 1927 Committee—'a system of State Scholarships for Adult Students to be administered by the Board of Education'—was not in fact implemented until 1947.

NEW PROSPECTS FOR MATURE STUDENTS

Since the Second World War the movement making for expanded opportunities, both in places at universities and residential colleges and in public awards, has gathered momentum everywhere. The Emergency Training Scheme for Teachers and the second chance of higher education of all kinds offered to returning service men whose careers had been suspended by the war exemplified a new mood in society—a desire not only to do justice but also to capitalise all talents for the immense tasks of social reconstruction. These training schemes were also valuable inasmuch as they set patterns of attainment that could authoritatively be referred to. In schools, factories and offices everywhere those who had benefited from their second chance demonstrated intellectual qualities and professional skills which, under the older dispensation, would have been lost to society. The argument for the mature student and his second chance was firmly vindicated, because it was so impressively displayed, in ways that impinged massively upon the public imagination.

Since that time certain other factors have contributed to creating **public attitudes more favourable to mature students.** In the first place, a succession of state papers (Early Leavers, the Crowther, Newsom and Robbins Reports), and many sociological studies following in detail the progress of secondary school children in depressed urban districts have convinced the thoughtful public that the full growth of intelligence in children does not occur automatically, and may be frustrated and discouraged by adverse social conditions such as bad housing, lack of parental interest and a barren urban landscape. In these conditions the potentiality for higher education in so many grammar and county modern school children has been unrealised. There is a more widespread realisation that yesterday's early leaver may well deserve our sympathy by becoming the late developer and mature student, even (it may be) the Mature State Scholar of today.

In the second place, as a nation we are having it borne in upon us ineluctably that, in a modern industrial society such as our own that is having to learn openmindedness and flexibility in adopting changes in professional knowledge and techniques, the ability and readiness to change job and seize the second chance becomes a social virtue. The modern state, it is now recognised, is wise, in making **provision for re-training,** to include measures which will enable the mature student to realise his full social value—and also gain in personal satisfaction—by moving from employment that is dull and undemanding to work that stretches a trained mind and involves him in responsible dealings with others.

Thirdly, and as a direct consequence of this second factor of greater mobility, the increasingly technical and skilled character of most responsible jobs today imposes on entrants to them the need to possess vocational or academic qualification. Where demand for special skill outstrips supply—as in so many professions today—this situation works out favourably for the mature student, and there are now many avenues of training (especially in teaching, management and the social services) that are invitingly open to him.

We shall return to this matter of qualifications later. but perhaps this is the point at which to stress the importance of one particular feature of the present scene. In provision for mature students **the work of the long-term residential colleges** stands out, and especially one feature of it. We refer to the ever-increasing importance of Ruskin, Newbattle and the other colleges as centres of preliminary academic training, where mature students get a good general grounding in liberal and social studies and gather confidence in handling the tools of learning before moving on to universities and training colleges of all kinds where they can acquire the degrees and diplomas so necessary in the new professions that they have chosen. This development represents the full flowering of an element that was always present in the work of these long-term residential colleges, although the motive of students' returning to give service in their old jobs and old localities was what preeminently caught the notice of the Adult Education Committee back in 1927. This transformation has called for many adjustments on the

part of these colleges. They have had to hold the balance between their long-established liberal approach to studies and the practical needs of students who require some kind of academic hall-marking for admission to universities and training colleges. For mature students these residential colleges stand in the middle of the picture as centres where their needs are most sympathetically served and their interests watched over.

SOME OPPORTUNITIES

Before we look at some of the opportunities now open to mature students, perhaps we should refer to a distinctive change that has come over the provenance of mature students since 1927. When the Adult Education Committee was making its survey, the overwhelming majority of 'adult students' came from tutorial and W.E.A. classes, and included very large numbers of students who had deep-planted roots in the trade union, co-operative and labour movement. By the 1950s the background of the mature students enrolled at the residential colleges was substantially different. In his doctoral thesis on Ruskin students presented in 1962 (which we have been privileged to see) Dr. J. Blumler observes that of 184 entering the college between 1952 and 1956—and answering his enquiry—102 had been associated with W.E.A. classes, and of these only 35 or 19% had attended tutorial classes. No doubt this transformation can in part be accounted for by the heavy demands of shift work which have kept students away from evening classes in the years of full employment. The present-day increase in day-release studies for trade-unionists promises to correct this imbalance as time goes on.

86 or 47% of the same Ruskin College students had come up through L.E.A. classes in Further Education colleges. More than half of the 184 students had already been enrolled at some time in vocational courses before their admission to Ruskin. Examination of the replies given by five years of Ruskin entrants during the same decade showed that 88% had been members or office-holders in trade unions, 70% of political parties, and 37% of voluntary societies in adult education.

A Universities: Admissions and Awards

I *Admission Requirements and Exemptions*

Normally, today, students who seek a place at a university and an L.E.A. grant are required to have at least two 'A' Levels in the General Certificate of Education. Most universities, however, declare themselves ready to set aside this requirement in favour of some other method of academic assessment when mature students present themselves. (See the summary in *University and College Entrance*, 7th edition, published by the N.U.T.) Many universities, among them Bristol, Leicester, and some of the new universities, have shown an active and welcome concern to admit students in this way. Oxford and Cambridge Universities, with a long history of sympathetic treatment for

mature students, remain among the most liberal in admitting them on the strength of an essay, interview, and recommendation rather than of formal examination results, and at both the Extra-Mural Departments actively sponsor the claims of suitable, well qualified candidates with the colleges. Some universities—notably Birmingham, Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham and Reading—run a special entrance examination for mature students. London also allows mature students credits for certificates and diplomas gained in its Extra-Mural classes.

But, while many universities state that they will waive the orthodox entrance requirements and judge 'on merit', this procedure works very unevenly and unequally. Principals of residential colleges have their own lists of the least regulation-ridden universities and the most welcoming, and there is no doubt that friendly connections, established over some years between particular universities and particular residential colleges or extra-mural departments, are helpful in securing places for mature students of the right calibre. There is, however, a great deal of discontent and frustration expressed by principals of residential colleges over the rigidity with which many universities still insist, with mature students, upon the same paper qualifications—the two 'A' Levels—that are required from schoolboy and schoolgirl entrants straight from the sixth forms.

One other disparity deserves mention here. Oxford University gives as of right (and Cambridge on the merits of individual cases) senior status, i.e., exemption from the first year of the degree course and from the First Public Examination, to Ruskin and Catholic Workers students who obtain University Diplomas. The extension of this practice among other universities would give valuable encouragement to mature students who are suitably qualified, and be advantageous to those same universities. The unwillingness of other universities to accord these exemptions has the effect of driving many Ruskin students towards Oxford rather than spreading them around other universities.

Although it concerns students in an age group below that of the mature student, an experimental scheme at present being conducted by Sussex University should be mentioned here. There it is open to students between 18 and 22 years of age, who have left school at 15 and have never acquired 'A' Levels, to submit themselves to a novel entrance test. They are called to interview on the basis of their references, write an essay on a topic within their range which they discuss with the selection committee, and undergo an intelligence and aptitude test. In 1964-66 nine candidates were admitted in this way, and eleven in the following year. The scheme is being carefully evaluated each year.

II *Awards Made To Mature Students For University Studies*

The number of awards made to mature students by universities themselves is very small. The Oxford University Extra-Mural Delegacy which pioneered the way with its

early awards discontinued its scholarships some years ago, but it will still—on the same evidence as of old, the essay and interview—sponsor candidates for admission to the colleges. Cambridge and Queen's University, Belfast, still award scholarships after the old plan, asking candidates to submit specimens of written work and come for interview. Liverpool, London School of Economics, Manchester and Southampton offer scholarships earmarked for adult students. The W.E.A. administers the Margaret James University Scholarship Fund which enables a woman student to attend Leeds or Manchester or Nottingham. The T.U.C. offers a number of scholarships tenable for one year at the London School of Economics for a special course in trade union studies. And the Miners' Welfare National Scholarship Scheme enables miners and their dependents who are appropriately qualified to obtain grant-aided university education.

In connection with the miners, we should perhaps allude here to the vigorous part that they have played in Nottingham, Sheffield, North Staffordshire and elsewhere in developing day-release courses with the help of the W.E.A. and extra-mural departments. The example of the miners and the experience of their tutors have led to the development of day-release courses of a similar kind with other industrial workers (e.g., with the steel workers at Corby). It is highly significant of the new opportunities opening out to mature students in this expanding field of adult education that, in their pamphlet on *Adult Education and the Industrial Community* (1965, N.I.A.E.), A. H. Thornton and F. J. Bayliss should be able to report that from the various day-release courses organised by the W.E.A. and the Extra-Mural Department of Nottingham University, 24 students went on to full-time higher education within a space of ten years.

III *L.E.A. Awards and State Mature Scholarships*

The main sources of grants for university study are the local education authorities and the Mature State Scholarship Scheme. It is now a fact of great importance for all students, including the mature, that the Department of Education and Science has made it mandatory upon all L.E.A.S that they grant-aid all students who have obtained two 'A' Levels in G.C.E. and a place at a university. The Principal of one of the long-term residential colleges points out, however, that awards are not mandatory upon L.E.A.S if the student has attended 'any full-time course of further education of two years duration' (*University and Other Awards Regulations*, 1962, paragraph 5). Awards to students of these colleges are, therefore, left to the discretion of L.E.A.S. This circumstance has probably hastened one important consequence in the sphere of residential adult education. Since so many universities remain adamant in requiring two 'A' Levels as a test of admission, this condition, coupled with the new basis of L.E.A. awards, is turning the attention of wardens and students in the long-term residential colleges towards practical steps for securing these examination results. Without gearing the work of the college to this primary end, Newbattle Abbey provides facilities for its students to sit for the Scottish Certificate of Education and the 'A' Level of G.C.E., so far with remarkable results. Ruskin has a very long-standing arrangement with Oxford University by which its students take diplomas in economics and social studies—

diplomas which usefully also meet admission requirements elsewhere. Coleg Harlech, fully awake to these new circumstances, is asking the University of Wales to formulate a diploma course in liberal studies for its students, and hopes to develop a two-year diploma course alongside its one-year liberal arts course.

The L.E.A. system of awards has a wide embrace, and however rigid it may be in individual cases, the formula to which it works is simple. The Scheme for Mature State Scholarships (30 awarded annually), by contrast, requires no formal examination qualifications of applicants and is a sort of net to catch mature students who, by reason of distinctive character and unusual background, fall through the meshes of the L.E.A. system. Great and scrupulous care is spent in examining their 5,000-word-long essays, in reviewing their background and records, and in interviewing them. Nowadays the majority of state awards students who present themselves come from L.E.A. evening institutes and adult centres. Many of these students, however, have also had experience of earlier attendance at W.E.A. classes. Since this scheme of state awards has gathered about it all the prestige of blue ribbon awards, it has done a great deal to focus public attention rather dramatically upon the unsatisfied potential that is still to be found among mature students. The lack of formality that characterises the procedures adopted in making these awards is quite refreshing.

B The Long-Term Residential Colleges: Admissions and Awards

I *Expanding Opportunities Offered by the Colleges*

The long-term residential colleges—Ruskin, Hillcroft, the Co-operative College, Fircroft, Coleg Harlech, the Catholic Workers' College and Newbattle Abbey—are entering upon a phase of great creative vigour. They have lately concluded a collective appeal for funds to enable them to build and expand to meet the rising demand from adult students. The trade unions contributed £54,000 towards the appeal, and the Department of Education and Science has undertaken to meet 50% of the cost of new buildings. Ruskin aims to increase its total number of students to 160 by October 1967. Between 1960 and 1966 Coleg Harlech has doubled its numbers, from 50 to 103 students.

We have already referred to the steady growth of these colleges as centres which provide students with an invaluable stimulus and discipline, with an impetus that carries them on to university and to various forms of higher academic and vocational training. Round about 1950 a quarter of Ruskin's output of students was going to university; in the late 1950s this proportion rose to one-third; and the number is still rising. Impressive too is the number that goes on to a whole range of colleges to train as teachers, trade union officials, personnel managers, probation officers, child care officers, almoners, youth employment officers, and social workers of all kinds. Each of the recent annual reports of Hillcroft shows an equally remarkable movement of most of its women students into universities, teacher training, preparation for child care, youth employment and social administration. For an expanding number of mature

students each year these colleges offer a gateway to new work that is not only highly skilled but also fully abreast of industry's and society's most keenly felt needs.

II *College and Other Awards*

These residential colleges have a few awards of their own to make, or through friendly organisations which pay for places for their members. The T.U.C. and individual trade unions make awards for students at Ruskin, Hillcroft and Coleg Harlech and co-operative societies everywhere to students at the Co-operative College. Recently the Gulbenkian Trust—in order to prompt public bodies more readily to see the value of this kind of residential education—have provided five full scholarships at Hillcroft for a period of six years, the recipients to be older women intending to take up teaching or social work. The same college also receives aid for particular students from various trusts and charities, and it has a small bursary fund to which societies and individuals contribute.

III *L.E.A. Awards*

These awards are, of course, small in their total amount, and these colleges have in the end to rely upon the readiness of L.E.A.S to make grants to the great majority of their entrants. In their applications to L.E.A.S the students of these colleges meet with very varied and unequal treatment. Contrary to the practices that have been defined centrally for making awards to university entrants (see above), L.E.A.S are not required by the regulations of the Department of Education and Science to make awards to students accepted by the long-term residential colleges. Such awards are purely permissive, not mandatory; and many L.E.A.S will not grant-aid students unless they are assured that the course they are undertaking leads to a diploma or some vocational qualification. This kind of proviso leads to very real inequalities, since the traditionally generous L.E.A.S remain sensitive and encouraging in making their grants. These inequalities are a very sore point with the principals and students of these colleges.

In a memorandum submitted in November 1965 to the Department of Education and Science the long-term residential colleges complain that L.E.A.S do not work to any common principle in making awards to entrants, and that under the discretionary system the whole procedure of application and reply is often quite hazardous. This situation embarrasses the colleges: they cannot use their own bursary funds to best advantage, and, knowing the chanciness of awards, they often offer more places than are strictly speaking available. The Department of Education and Science has expressed the hope that L.E.A.S will 'be prepared to make awards, at uniform rates, to all students in these institutions' (Circular 16/64, paragraph 79), but so far no guidance has been given by the D.E.S. about what the appropriate uniform rates should be. The Association of Education Committees, lacking this guidance, has recommended to its members that they should follow the grant arrangements made for students in Colleges of Education (Administrative Memorandum 9/65). The residential colleges also make a plea for more liberal supplementary allowances, since mature students are often in

great difficulty meeting mortgages, hire purchase payments and National Insurance contributions out of much reduced income. In the same memorandum it is stated that in 1965/66, 37 students were refused grants, and 25 allotted grants below the recognised scale.

C Access To Teacher-Training Colleges

I *The Drive To Recruit Mature Students*

We have not attempted to detail all the avenues of opportunity now open to mature students. The range is very great, from librarianship to becoming a probation officer, from old people's welfare to training as a clergyman under the Bishop of Southwark's scheme. The Advisory Centre for Education has surveyed the whole field excellently in 'Educational Opportunities For Over-25s', which is a supplement to their organ *Where*, published in December, 1965.

Teacher-training, however, deserves some special reference, since it absorbs so many mature students and since a concerted national effort is now being made to absorb even more. In the Ninth Report of the National Advisory Council on the Training and Supply of Teachers—'*The Demand For and Supply Of Teachers, 1963-1986*' (H.M.S.O., 1965)—there is a striking appreciation of the support that might come from the body of mature students in the campaign to overcome teacher shortage:

> 'In addition, we think that there is a good prospect of securing an increase in the proportion of older entrants beyond the 1963 figure of 13 per cent (2,700 out of a total intake of 21,000 students). Evidence derived from a recent enquiry undertaken by the Central Office of Information supports the view that many mature people with the necessary academic qualifications could be persuaded to train as teachers; and if the number of older entrants rose at the same rate as between 1961 and 1963, it would reach about 7,000 (17 per cent of a total intake of 40,000) in 1971' (Paragraph 70)

The Report does not elaborate upon the special means that might be adopted to bring forward greater numbers of mature students for training, but pointedly mentions this body of possible recruits in recommending that a drive should be made to go beyond the Robbins target of 40,000 taken annually into the colleges of education by 1971. In a Note of Dissent one of the members of the Council, Mr. E. E. Robinson of the A.T.T.I., pleads forcefully for the experimental use of technical college resources in the training of teachers, and for "unorthodox methods of training mature men and women who have good educational or intellectual attainment outside the traditional academic channels". He continues:

> 'Without sacrificing standards, but abandoning some academic conventions, new types of courses including combinations of part-time and full-time study could be devised which could attract men and women who for financial or other reasons are unable to undertake courses of the conventional type. Possibly, the technical

colleges could make their best contribution to teacher supply in providing courses for these students'. (Page 94)

It is interesting to note that these points have not been lost upon the Secretary of State, Mr. A. Crosland, and that Mr. Robinson's plea has in some measure been answered by the Minister's recent announcement that new training departments will be opened in five L.E.A. technical colleges in the autumn of 1967, and that college of education 'outposts' (five already working, nine on the way) have been set up to train mature students who cannot leave home and do not live within daily travelling distance of a college. (N.U.T. Easter Conference speech, 1966). 'My aim', he added, 'is to blanket the entire country with facilities for day training'.

II *Admission Procedures*

At the level of organisation and material resources there has been a pleasing flexibility of approach. When it comes, however, to the requirements for entry to the colleges of education, the prospect before the mature student is not so smooth. The orthodox qualification that all students, including mature students, should possess in order to enter a college of education, is five 'O' Level passes in the General Certificate of Education. It is possible for the letter of this requirement to be set aside for mature students who have special experience or some suitable alternative academic background, and this power is frequently used. The procedure is that the college of education refers each case to the Institute of Education of which it is a constituent. The Institute may then grant admission to the mature student on qualifications other than the normal ones for young trainees, and may even allow him to follow a shortened course. In this way, mature students often take a two-year, even under special circumstances a one-year course, instead of the usual three-year. At four special training colleges for those who already have technical qualifications and wish to teach technical subjects or liberal studies there are courses lasting one year.

The power to waive the five 'O' Levels and admit on merit is used very patchily, and there are complaints, from principals of residential colleges and from principals of training colleges themselves, that Institutes of Education are too inflexible in insisting upon good and orthodox paper qualifications. It should be added that two principals who were consulted in preparing this paper had been agreeably surprised by the considerable number of their mature entrants who could in fact produce five or more 'O' Levels, many of them married women who had in the past accumulated these passes, or some of them, when they were at school. Nevertheless, apart from these cases, we believe that it is unrealistic and stultifying to require mature students, as many colleges still do, to sit examinations intended to test adolescents. It is interesting also to note that most colleges of education have sizeable groups of mature students out of residence.

III *The Day Colleges of Education and the 'Outposts'*

One aspect of the teacher-training world is at present extremely favourable to the mature student. We refer to the network of day training colleges for mature students,

situated in areas of dense population over the whole country, which the D.E.S. has shown much energy in developing. The day training college is admirably designed to meet one of the great disabilities under which many mature students labour. They have dependents—aged parents or husbands and children—who cannot be left in order to take up residential places. These day colleges not only overcome this problem of immobility, but even draw virtue from it. As David Grugeon points out in a recent article surveying the work of Manchester College of Education (*Where*, Autumn, 1965), 'A day college for adults is, after all, an adult community. You don't have to lose face by being cut off from your own social life and submitting to rules devised for school-leavers. You can retain your roots in your own community'. He points, in his account, to two rather pleasant consequences of this intimacy between the college and the students' homes: mothers could and did try out their teaching projects with their own five-to-eight-year-old children, and a number of husbands had followed their wives into training by becoming interested in what their wives were doing. There is no doubt that day training colleges like this one (which is led by an inspired and devoted principal) triumphantly answer the difficulties that so many mature students have to meet.

Apparently the Secretary of State and his Department think so too. To a recent question in Parliament (December, 1965) he replied:

> 'I am anxious to make training facilities more widely accessible to older men and women, most of whom are unable to get away from home to take a training course. Three new day colleges (already there are eight) are planned to open in 1966 and other possibilities are being considered; a number of college "outposts" have been set up and others are being planned; and I have recently put to the national association of teachers, local education authorities and others my proposals for the establishment of part-time training courses for older students whose personal circumstances make it difficult for them to undertake a full-time course'.

The last of these proposals—for part-time training—has not yet been realised. In a further statement (June 1966) the Minister announced that five L.E.A.s had been asked to open departments of education at their technical colleges, and that five 'outposts', attached to colleges of education, were already working in large centres of population. The establishment of college 'outposts' and the counselling service given by day training colleges to partially qualified mature students are both steps in the right direction.

In this field of opportunity the prospects of the mature student seem promising indeed, and a great deal of imagination has plainly gone here into understanding and overcoming his problems.

IV *Grants for Trainees*

All students accepted for training colleges are automatically awarded grants. They seem generally to be satisfactory and sufficient, for married women for example. There are still, however, some cases where some financial stress is felt: widows and women

separated from their husbands and looking after children, women with elderly dependents, and married men who previously earned higher salaries and have stiff financial commitments. One principal also makes a plea for there being some financial provision for help with the family when a married woman confronts a crisis at home.

DISABILITIES: AN ASSESSMENT

Seen in the perspective that we have tried to establish, the opportunities open to mature students and the grant-aid available to them have improved to such an extent that these students now enjoy a socially assured and sympathetically understood position. There are, however, two respects in which their legitimate claims to help have not been met or are only partially met.

I Need for Continuing Expansion of Long-Term Residential Colleges

Firstly, it is evident that, to face the pressure of applications that come in each year, the long-term residential colleges have insufficient places to meet all the claims. It is true that they are embarking immediately upon programmes of building and expanded studentship, and the next five years will be for them a period of advance and consolidation. Nevertheless, such is the dynamic behind all this movement of educating mature students that it would be wise to start now anticipating the needs of the 1970s. Plans should be laid down now for the provision of more places and for further expansion where the optimum growth has not yet been reached in particular colleges; and better still, for the founding of new residential colleges.

II Revision of Methods of Admission and Grant-Aid

Secondly, there still exist patches of discouragement that derive from the way admission policies are applied at some universities and institutes of education; and also from the way grant regulations affect mature students. This is especially true where they wish to enter long-term residential colleges, or are daunted by the inadequacy of allowances to meet their obligations to dependents or the burden of fixed financial commitments. The first of these claims can be met only by some step of bold and imaginative planning, as farseeing in its own order and kind as that which has established the present network of day-training colleges. The second claim can be met only by sympathetic administration, at university and central and local government levels.

A FOOTNOTE

We have concentrated above on the aspirations and needs of those mature students who have been impelled to seek prolonged higher education and a new vocational status in society. The size of that great body of mature students and the energy with

which their claims are rightly made must not blind us to the continuing needs of another body of mature students. We refer to those who, under the stimulus of work in an extra-mural tutorial or further education class, have discovered some academic interest which they would like to pursue in depth. Such students, when suitably qualified by record and ability, would warrant resources being made available to allow them to enjoy a period of release from their usual work and to follow a piece of study or research, residentially or on a part-time basis, under the guidance of a tutor. We hope that, with expanding national wealth, provision will be found in the national budget for some older students such as these to work for a short spell in a university or at a residential college, and that extra-mural departments will use their influence to secure for them scholarly guidance and access to libraries and other amenities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Mature Students and Admission to Universities and Colleges of Education

(a) While evidence of academic ability and capacity to profit from higher education should rightly be sought from all entrants to universities, flexibility of assessment should, in particular, be shown towards mature students when the requirement for admission (normally two 'A' Levels in G.C.E.) is being applied. Many universities already do this by admitting mature students, either on the basis of a special matriculation or entrance examination or on evidence of record and work done in further and adult education classes. We believe that such methods of admission should be more widely applied, and greater uniformity of practice in this regard striven for among universities.

(b) It would greatly encourage mature students to undertake degree courses if universities more generally exempted students with good records in further and adult education from the first year or preliminary stages of degree courses. This step would also make for a more balanced distribution of mature students among the universities, since at present the liberal policies of Oxford and Cambridge in this matter make a disproportionate flow of students into those universities.

(c) While in general the Institutes of Education show liberality in waiving the five 'O' Level G.C.E. qualification for the admission of suitably qualified mature students to colleges of education, there is still a lack of uniformity in this practice among Institutes. This discouragement should be removed by a common acceptance that examinations primarily designed to test adolescents are not of necessity well suited to the assessment of academic quality and experience in adults.

2 L.E.A. and Other Public Awards

(a) Since the long-term residential colleges have long occupied a valued and stable place in the national system of higher education, mature students applying for places in

those colleges and seeking L.E.A. support should now have the assurance that, as with students entering universities and colleges of education, uniform scales of grant and generally accepted principles of awarding will be applied in their cases by the L.E.A.S. It would make for progress if the Department of Education and Science could give fuller guidance to L.E.A.S on this matter, endorsing, if possible, the agreement made between the residential colleges and the Association of Education Committees. In these scales of grant aid, generous consideration should be given to allowances made to cover such adult commitments as mortages, hire purchase and national insurance contributions.

(b) In the case of mature students accepted for teacher training, there are grounds for sympathetically reviewing the allowances given at present to the following classes of mature student: widows or women separated from their husbands and looking after children, women with elderly dependents, and married men who previously earned higher salaries and carry severe financial commitments.

(c) The operation of University and Other Awards Regulations 1962, paragraph 5, under which it is made discretionary for L.E.A.S to make awards to students who have attended 'any full-time course of further education of two years' duration', should be reviewed, especially in its effect upon mature students leaving long-term residential colleges to pursue university and other courses.

3 Expanded Provision in the Long-Term Residential Colleges

(a) Since the long-term residential colleges have achieved such conspicuous success in meeting the needs of mature students for pre-university education as well as in liberal and social studies, and as the number of such students will continue to increase with expanding opportunities, these colleges should be encouraged to expand to the optimum limit of growth where this has not already been attained. To enable them to do this, central government grants should be made available to them, for their capital and current needs, on a scale more generous than at present and comparable with those grants given to other institutions in the fields of higher and further education.

(b) Plans should also be laid now for the founding of further long-term residential colleges in anticipation of the growing needs of mature students in the 1970s.

SOME GENERAL INFORMATION

Facilities in Adult and Further Education

Mature students wishing to undertake courses at universities, colleges of education and further education, and long-term residential colleges usually do so as a sequel to interests and studies cultivated in adult classes. Information about these classes can readily be obtained by writing to the District W.E.A. office, the Extra-Mural Department

of the local university, or the Chief Education Officer of the Local Education Authority. Their addresses can usually be obtained at the local public library. Or it can be obtained by referring to *Adult Education in* 19—(the year book of the National Institute of Adult Education, 35 Queen Anne Street, London, W.1). If any difficulty is encountered, students should consult the General Secretary, the Workers' Educational Association, Temple House, London, W.1.

Students may also find help in the courses run by the short-term residential colleges. A handlist of these courses is issued by the National Institute of Adult Education (address above). Correspondence courses, sometimes allied with radio, television and week-end courses, are provided (with a special eye on the needs of mature students) by The National Extension College, 8 Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge.

The Long-Term Residential Colleges

These colleges provide courses in liberal and social studies well suited to students who have had experience in W.E.A., extra-mural and further education classes. At four of the colleges, students can take a university diploma at the end of the course. At all of these colleges students can pursue their subject to an advanced level, and obtain a valuable training in methodical study.

The addresses of these colleges are:

Catholic Workers' College (Plater College), Boars Hill, Oxford.
Co-operative College, Stanford Hall, Loughborough.
Coleg Harlech, Harlech, Merioneth.
Fircroft College (men only), Selly Oak, Birmingham, 29.
Hillcroft College (women only), Surbiton, Surrey.
Newbattle Abbey College, Dalkeith, Midlothian.
Ruskin College, Oxford.

For those specially interested in theological and social studies and in preparing for work in the Church and its societies:

William Temple College, Rugby, Warwickshire.
Woodbrooke College, Selly Oak, Birmingham, 29.

Admission to the Universities (including Technological Universities), Colleges of Education, etc.

The entrance requirements in these colleges have been usefully summarised in *University and College Entrance: The Basic Facts* (Seventh Edition, National Union of Teachers, 4/6d).

For intending teachers the following are invaluable reference books:

Handbook On The Training For Teaching (Methuen 50/-d.)
Compendium of Teacher Training Courses in England and Wales (H.M.S.O. 6/6d.)

Students should consult the principal of their nearest training college where there may be facilities for day-attendance and part-time studies. Excellently adapted to the circumstances of many mature students are the eleven day colleges of education which are now fairly evenly distributed over the country at the centre of large urban areas. There are also 'outposts' of colleges of education, often centred in technical colleges, and designed to meet the needs of mature students. At four Technical Teacher Training Colleges there are one-year courses for those who are already qualified in technical subjects.

The facilities of the local technical and further education colleges (e.g. in the matter of courses for external degrees and for professional societies' examinations) should be explored also, by consulting the principals or registrars.

Careers and Training

A most useful survey of educational opportunities for over-25s, entitled *A Second Chance*, was published as a supplement to *Where* in December, 1965 (Advisory Centre for Education, 57 Russell Street, Cambridge).

Guidance to the training facilities leading to many careers will be found in the following books:

Careers Guide	Opportunities in the professions, industry and commerce (H.M.S.O., 15/-d.)
Choice of Careers Series	Pamphlets on many careers (H.M.S.O., 1/-d. and 1/6d.)
Technical Education in Britain	(H.M.S.O., 3/-d.)
Voluntary Social Services	(National Council of Social Service)
Public Social Services	(National Council of Social Service)
Training and Employment in Social Work	(National Council of Social Service)
Conspectus of Management Courses	(British Institute of Management)
Bulletin of Special Courses in Higher Technology	(London and Home Counties Regional Advisory Council for Technical Education, Tavistock House, S. Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1)
Management Studies and Commerce	

The following addresses will probably be found useful:

National Council for Social Service	26 Bedford Square, London W.C.1.
Department of Education and Science	Curzon Street, London, W.1.
Civil Service Commission	Burlington Gardens, London, W.1.
Council for Training and Social Work	Clifton House, Euston Rd., London, N.W.1.

National Institute for Social Work Training	Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, London, W.C.1.
Central Training Council in Child Care	Home Office, Thames House, Millbank, London, S.W.1.
Probation and After-Care Department of the Home Office	Horseferry House, Dean Ryle Street, London, S.W.1
The Institutional Management Association	Swinton House, Grays Inn Road, London, W.C.1.
The Library Association	7 Ridgmount Street, London, W.C.1.
Nursing Recruitment Service	6 Cavendish Square, London, W.1.
The Education Department of the National Association of Local Government Officers	N.A.L.G.O. House, 8 Harewood Row, London, N.W.1.

Awards to Students

The Department of Education and Science (Awards Branch, 11-13 Cornwall Terrace, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1) issues booklets describing the conditions under which L.E.A. university grants and grants to teacher trainees are made. A leaflet explaining the conditions for the award of State Scholarships for Mature Students can be obtained from the same source.

Merle Hastings: *Grants for Higher Education* (A.C.E. and Cresset Press) and *Grants Year Book* (National Union of Students) are extremely useful reference books. The first includes details of awards tenable at Ruskin College and other long-term residential colleges.

Many universities (e.g. Cambridge, Liverpool, London School of Economics, Leeds Manchester, Southampton, Queen's of Belfast) have scholarships earmarked for mature students. There are awards reserved for trade unionists with suitable qualifications at long-term residential colleges and London School of Economics. Enquiry should be made of the T.U.C. Educational Trust, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. Particulars of the Miners' Welfare Scholarship Scheme can be obtained from 5 Hobart Place, London, S.W.1

The Workers' Educational Association administers the Margaret James Scholarship Fund which enables working women to follow degree courses at Leeds, Manchester or Nottingham Universities.